

APR 13 1981

# FORUM

The preparation of this Newsletter was financed in part through a Comprehensive Planning Grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development  
VOLUME 15 NUMBER 2 MARCH 1981

## INDUSTRIAL GROWTH IN COUNTY COMPLEMENTS RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

When someone mentions Palm Beach County, one of the first things that may come to mind is growth. And, for most people, this growth is in terms of residential and population growth. After all, Palm Beach County grew 70% during the past decade to a population approaching 600,000.

Economic forecasts recently released by the National Association of Home Builders indicate that Palm Beach County is ranked second nationally in terms of new housing starts in 1981. Leading the list is the Dallas-Fort Worth area, with Houston, which for years was the leading housing market, trailing West Palm Beach in third position.

But Palm Beach County has grown in areas other than residential: namely, commercial and industrial. From 1976-1979 over 8,500 jobs were added to manufacturing, and trade and services continue to rank first and second in total employment in the County accounting for a joint total of 50%.

During 1980, West Palm Beach led the 16 metropolitan areas in the state with a total growth of 8,900 new jobs, and it matched the Melbourne-Titusville area for largest percentage increase at 40% growth. Trade and services showed substantial increases and contributed heavily to the area's growth.

In 1979, over \$117 million in building permits were issued for commercial and industrial projects. This accounted for over one-fifth of the total \$571 million worth of commercial and industrial activi-

ty in the entire decade.

Throughout the 1970s, commercial and industrial construction permits accounted for approximately 11% of the dollar volume of all permits issued. The decade finished strong with 1979 being up almost half over 1978's activity.

The 1980s started out extremely strong, continuing the growth in commercial and industrial building activity evidenced at the end of the 1970s. In 1980, the County witnessed a record year with almost \$106.5 million in commercial and industrial building permits issued.

Almost two-thirds (65%) of all this activity was accounted for by just three jurisdictions. The unincorporated area led the way with over \$39 million in permits, with Juno Beach and Boca Raton adding \$16 million and \$14.25 million, respectively.

The past two years have witnessed a resurgence in hotel/motel activity in Palm Beach County. Two major hotels are presently under construction, the Sheraton at PGA National and the West Palm Beach Hyatt. The Sheraton (PGA) is a \$20 million project which will have a total of 336 rooms and convention facilities when completed and the Hyatt, a \$22 million project, will have 367 rooms plus convention facilities.

Servico, Inc., one of the largest hotel franchisees in the country plans an \$18 million, 300,000 square foot hotel and office complex adjacent to Palm Beach International Airport. This project is scheduled for completion in mid-1982.



The Boca Raton Hotel and Club recently completed a 212 room expansion named the Boca Beach Club, and the Holiday Inn in Palm Beach Gardens is building a 126 room addition in phase one of a planned three-phase expansion. The second and third phases call for a 1,000 capacity convention center and another 138 rooms.

A 198 unit Sheraton Hotel in Boca Raton and a 100 unit Super 8 Motel, to be located in northern Palm Beach County, are both scheduled for completion in 1981.

While this resurgence of hotel/motel activity is certain to enhance our tourism industry, it is likely to also provide an incentive for numerous desirable manufacturing firms to consider expansion or relocation into Palm Beach County.

In recent years, several major industrial firms, such as those in the United Technologies' family, have expanded their local operation or have come to our area.

United Technologies is very well represented in Palm Beach County with Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, Sikorsky Helicopters, Otis Elevators, and Metal Products, Inc. Pratt & Whitney is continually growing with an ambitious \$19 million expansion program underway and ranks as the state's number one industrial employer with over 8,000 personnel. Sikorsky opened a \$5 million testing facility early in 1977 and has boosted their employment from 75 to 340 persons. Otis established their Latin American Headquarters here, and Metal Products, Inc. is coming to Boynton Beach.

Other large manufacturers such as IBM in Boca Raton (4,100 employees) and Northern Telecom in Mangonia Park (730 employees) have completed sizeable expansions recently: 146,000 square feet and 50,000 square feet, respectively. Additionally, IBM has recently announced plans to build a 100,000 square foot support facility for their Boca Raton plant in Delray Beach. Some 300 workers are expected at this new facility.

Several major scientific and technical industries have located in the new Arvida Park of Commerce (APOC) in Boca Raton north of IBM: Siemens Corporation,

Modcomp, Mitel, Datamedix, and CRC Press.

Boynton Beach will be witnessing two major developments in months to come: a major regional shopping center and the Motorola Corporation Plant.

In charting the commercial and industrial growth of Palm Beach County, the Area Planning Board has assembled a data base. In addition to the facts and figures on basic employment, retail sales, and other economic indicators, the Area Planning Board has inventoried the major shopping facilities and industrial employers, as well as compiling a land use data base on commercial-industrial properties with the aid of the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser and the Palm Beach County Data Processing Department.

An early 1979 survey indicated that a total of 35,000 acres was devoted to commercial-industrial pursuits or were zoned for such uses. This amounts to 55.5 square miles or roughly the total area included within the city limits of West Palm Beach and Delray Beach, combined.

Focusing on just industrial land uses, the same survey indicates that approximately 30 square miles or 19,045 acres are devoted to the active or potential pursuit of industrial activities. This equates roughly to the size of Boynton Beach, Delray Beach, and Lake Worth combined. Only one-quarter of this industrial land is currently in use (4,585 acres. 24.1%). Vacant industrial land of 14,460 acres exists in the County.

Although there is 3.5 times more commercial square footage than industrial square footage available in the County, industrial uses still account for 16,231,109 square feet, or some 372 acres under roof. Over three-fourths of this total (12,385,448 sq. ft.) is found in just 6 jurisdictions in the County.

Figure I illustrates that West Palm Beach accounts for roughly one-quarter of all the industrial square footage in the county. Outside the jurisdictions of Riviera Beach, Boca Raton, Lake Worth, Lake Park, and the unincorporated area, which contain over half (53.3%) of the



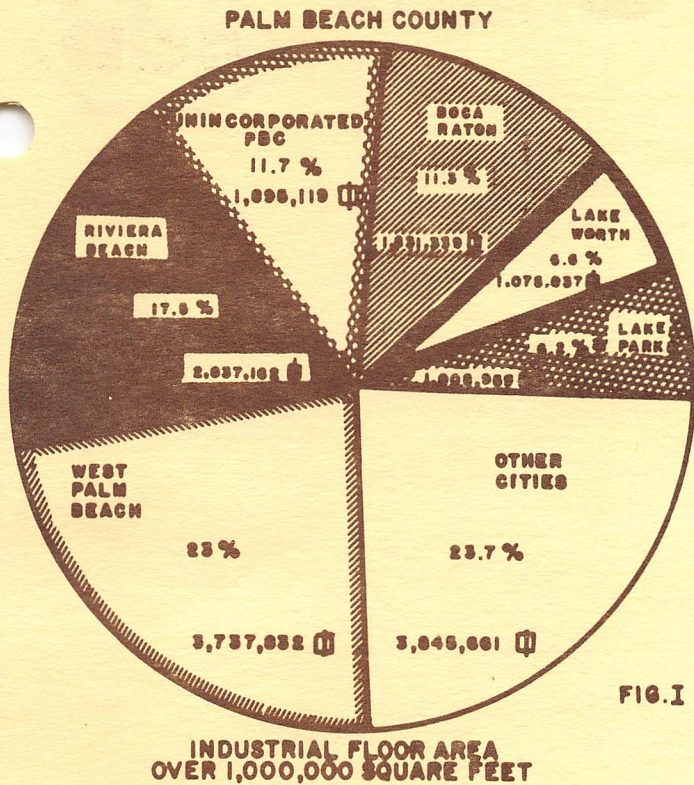


FIG. I

available square footage, the remaining 31 municipalities combine for roughly the same amount of square footage as that available in West Palm Beach.

Four-fifths (80%) of all the improved and vacant industrial acreage is found in only 3 areas, with the unincorporated area ac-

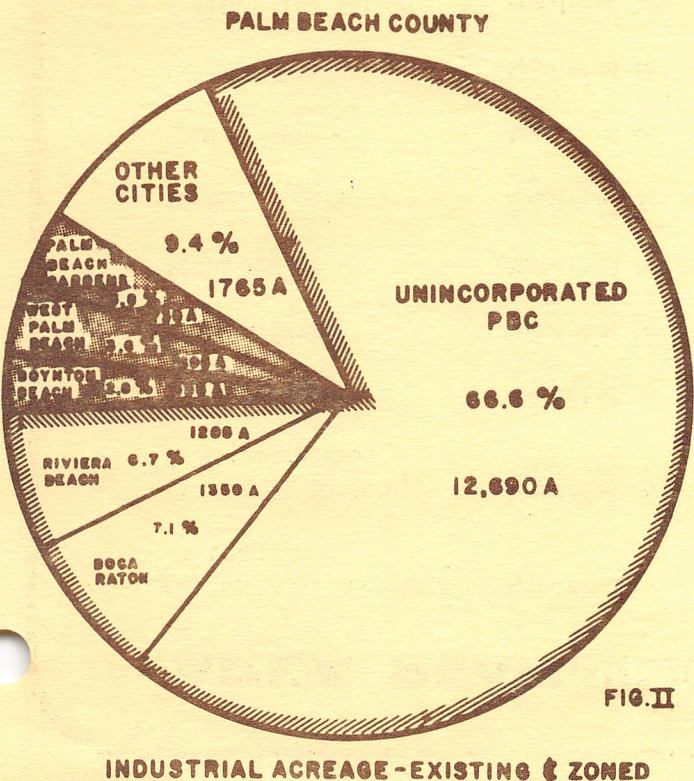


FIG. II

counting for two-thirds (66.6%). Riviera Beach and Boca Raton are the other two areas.

As Figure II indicates, Boynton Beach, West Palm Beach, and Palm Beach Gardens combine for an additional 10% of total industrial acreage, leaving less than 10% shared by the remaining 32 jurisdictions in the County.

In terms of future development, the unincorporated area shows the greatest development potential with over 10,000 acres or roughly three-quarters of the total vacant industrial land in the County. This is 5 times more than the improved acreage already existing in the unincorporated area. Outside the 6 jurisdictions shown in Figure III, only 6.5% of the total developable industrial land is available.

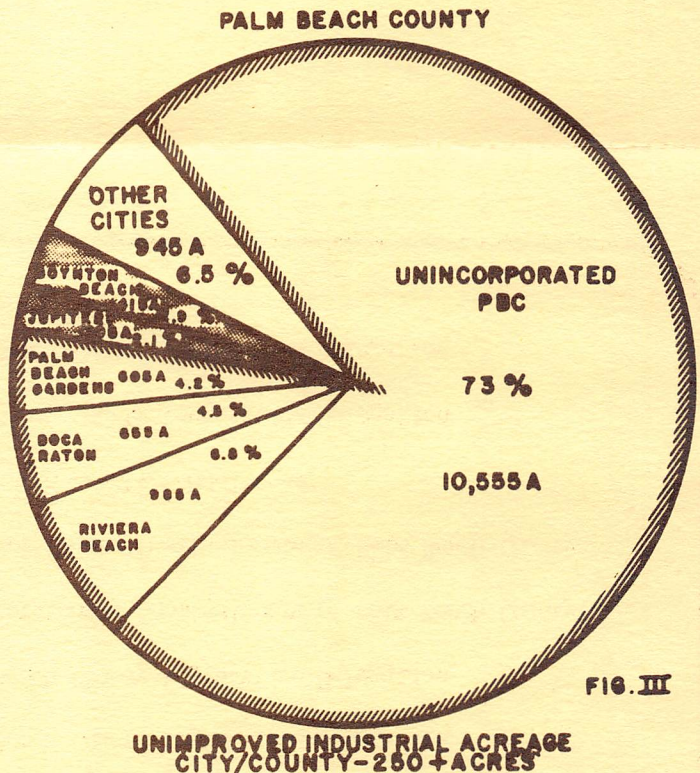


FIG. III

The Area Planning Board is continuously collecting and analyzing statistics concerning the county's economic base, while working closely with agencies and individuals concerned with developing the commercial-industrial potential of Palm Beach County. Anyone desiring to obtain this data should contact the Area Planning Board Research Section. Phone (305) 683-9450.





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